

ESO 201

MOTIVATION & HUMAN NEEDS

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May, 1974

## MOTIVATION AND HUMAN NEEDS\*

One of the basic problems in any society is how to motivate people to work. In today's technological world many people derive only slight personal satisfaction from their work and enjoy little sense of accomplishment or creativity. In large organizations it is necessary for people to work together, follow orders which possibly they may neither understand nor approve. Few individuals have the feeling of independence or freedom from control experienced by the individual entrepreneur. How can we motivate people who have boring jobs, little freedom to make decisions on their own and a normal quota of laziness and stubbornness.

One of the most difficult tasks of an organization is that of motivating its employees--managerial and non-managerial alike--to perform the work assigned to them in a manner that meets or surpasses standards of performance. The basic problem of motivation is how to create a situation in which employees can satisfy their individual needs while at the same time working toward the goals of the organization.

Many methods are used to encourage employees to put forth their best effort. Among those commonly used are a variety of formulas intended to relate pay to performance, provisions for security on the job and in

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retirement, praise and recognition in the form of special awards or promotion. The existence of so many approaches to motivation is an indication of the complexity of the problem.

Many factors are capable of motivating employees. Some of these are a normal part of a work situation and can be controlled in some measure by the firm; other factors have their origin in the individual employee, in his home, in his community, and are beyond the control of the firm. In addition, those forces that motivate an individual today may be of little value in motivating the same individual next month or next year. Fundamental to the success of any plan for motivating employees is the extent to which the intended motivations meet the needs of the individual employee.

It has been said that managers motivate their people or fail to do so. Used this way, it implies that the concern is how superiors influence subordinates. The dictionary, however, describes a "motive" as something within the individual which incites him to action. Basic needs of the individual result in his striving. Using this approach the basic problem of management is discovering these needs.

When we speak of motivation, or in more precise terms, motivated behavior, we are referring to behavior having three distinguishing characteristics:

1. Motivated behavior is sustained.
2. Motivated behavior is directed toward the achievement of a goal.
3. It is behavior resulting from a felt need. Thus, if efforts to motivate people are to be successful, management must either create needs within people or offer a means to satisfy needs already in existence within the individual.

#### Fundamental Needs of Man

One of the most useful and widely quoted classifications of human needs was developed by Maslow who recognizes five basic human needs.<sup>1</sup>

These are:

1. Psychological needs
2. Safety needs
3. Affection needs
4. Esteem needs
5. Self-actualization needs

#### Psychological Needs

Man is a wanting animal. As soon as one of his needs is satisfied, another appears in its place. The process is unending.

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<sup>1</sup>A. H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," Psychological Review, Vol. 1, July 1943, pp. 370-396.

Man's needs are organized in a series of levels, a hierarchy of importance. At the first level are the psychological needs. Hunger and thirst are classical examples of psychological drives. Man lives for bread alone, when there is no bread. Satisfaction of psychological needs is necessary for the preservation of life. In most industrial economies these needs are satisfied relatively easily. Once satisfied, they cease to operate as primary motivators of behavior and are replaced by motivational forces of a higher order.

#### Safety Needs

The meaning of the term safety, as a goal of motivated behavior, is broad. It includes the desire for psychological security as well as the need for physical safety. Factors as clothing, shelter and protection from attack contribute to physical safety. Much of the effort of organized society at the community level is directed toward the maintenance of security needs; for example, fire and police departments.

When psychological needs are fulfilled, safety needs become the predominant motivators. Psychological safety takes the form of ordering the environment into a predictable pattern and attempts to cope with anticipated difficulties in the future. Supplemental unemployment benefits, pension plans, termination pay and other forms of economic insurance stress

the need for predictability and security. The desire for the familiar and predictable goes a long way toward explaining the resistance to change found in many organizations. It may be neither the direction or the nature of the change but the fact that change implies something new and unfamiliar-- a psychological threat.

#### Affection Needs

Need for affection and love may best be described as a need to belong, not only as a wanted member of a family unit but also as a member of relatively small groups and the need to belong often outweighs the financial incentives and logical appeals of management. When man's psychological needs are satisfied, his need for belonging, for association, for acceptance by his fellows, for giving and receiving friendship and love, become important motivators of his behavior.

#### Esteem Needs

Above the social needs--in the sense that they do not become motivators until lower needs are reasonably well satisfied--are the needs of the greatest significance to management and to man himself. These are the egoistic needs. They are of two kinds; the first are those that relate to man's self-esteem -- the needs for self-confidence, for independence, for achievement, for competence, for knowledge. The second, an important corollary to the need for esteem and achievement is that the achievement must be recognized and appreciated by someone else. These are the needs that relate to one's

reputation--need for status, for recognition, for appreciation, and for deserved respect by one's fellows. The desire for prestige and status (recognition by others) is an important aspect in the drive for achievement. Attaining goals leads to feelings of self-respect, strength and confidence--on the other hand, continued failure, frustration and defeat can result in feelings of inadequacy and a withdrawal from competitive situations.

#### Self-Actualization Needs

The capstone of the hierarchy of needs, is self-fulfillment. They are the needs for realizing ones own potentialities, for continued self-development, for being creative in the broadest sense of the term.

Maslow's original statement, "What a man can be, he must be," can be paraphrased to state, "what a man can do, he must do."

Complete self-actualization or self-fulfillment is rare, perhaps because the other needs--psychological, safety, affection and esteem--must reach a level of minimal satisfaction before self-fulfillment becomes the dominant motivator of ones life.

All employees are not alike in motivation. The pluralistic model should be taken only as a flexible guide.

Motivation is much more than incentives within an individual firm. It is conditioned by cultural factors which vary from time to time and from

region to region. The high production of American workers and managers is partly the result of the fact that they are conditioned by their social environment to strive for higher material reward, to exploit opportunities and to work toward future goals.

There is probably no universal motivator for all of mankind nor is there a single motivating force for any one individual. Needs are relative in their strength and it is not necessary to satisfy a "lower" need fully before a higher need may emerge and operate as a motivator. Needs are felt gradually and may become motivators along with other needs, even though the earlier needs are not completely satisfied.

A person's concept of himself and his interpretation of his environment provide a consistency to behavior throughout his whole life and determine to a large extent those motives which influence him most. The image of self is formed relatively early in life and is reflected to the outer world by dress, speech, posture and actions. The reflection remains fairly constant throughout life, thereby enabling others to predict with considerable accuracy ones behavior under a given set of circumstances. We may say that "clothes do not make the man" yet clothes along with actions, posture, speech, response are the man.



There are many dimensions to self image. Of particular interest is the individual's estimate of his degree of competence and his ability to achieve. Achievement or lack of it shapes the environment in which one lives. Those who achieve develop a power over the environment. They are able to cope with the environment and seemingly control it to their advantage. A person who exercises power and control over his environment learns to expect a high degree of reward from that environment and when received, the reward tends to make him feel that he is master of his own destiny. At this point we are meeting the needs of self-fulfillment.

We stated earlier that management must either create felt needs within the individual or offer a means of satisfying those needs already in existence within the individual. Undoubtedly, the most widely used incentive to motivate people is money, yet the evidence is overwhelming that more money does not necessarily mean greater productivity.

The economic worth of money enables it to serve as a means of satisfying the basic psychological and safety needs. Its psychological value is that for many persons money symbolizes achievement, success, prestige and power--a way of fulfilling higher social needs.

Dr. Frederick Herzberg, in research done in Pittsburgh with engineers and accountants, found that positive attitudes toward work arise from the job itself and function as motivators. These incidents are associated with

feelings of self-improvement, achievement, and the desire for and acceptance of greater responsibility. The feelings thus generated are of relatively long duration and result in increased productivity. A second set of factors related to productivity on the job are conditions peripheral to the job itself (pay, working conditions, company policy, quality of supervision). When these factors are inadequate; i.e., when one believes that they are not up to par they function as dissatisfiers, but when present they do not motivate employees to greater productivity. Instead, he described them as hygienic in character in that their presence makes it possible for motivators to function.

Dr. M. Scott Meyers, Manager of Personnel Research, Texas Instruments, Inc., using essentially the same technique as Herzberg raised and answered<sup>1</sup> the three following questions regarding employee motivation.

"What motivates employees to work effectively? A challenging job which allows a feeling of achievement, responsibility, growth, advancement, enjoyment of work itself and earned recognition.

What dissatisfies workers? Most factors are peripheral to the job--work rules, lighting, coffee breaks, titles, seniority rights, wages, fringe benefits and the like.

When do workers become dissatisfied? When opportunities for meaningful achievement are eliminated and they become sensitized to their environment and begin to find fault."

Meyers' work is not limited to professionally trained but it included five job classifications, three salaried and two hourly classifications.

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<sup>1</sup>  
M. Scott Meyers, "Who Are Your Motivated Workers?" Harvard Business Review, Vol. 42, Jan.-Feb., 1964, pp. 73-88.

Four groups were men but the fifth group was women--the men were or were potentially motivated by factors within the job itself. However, the female assembly workers were described as maintenance seekers in that factors peripheral to the work itself are dominant in creating either strong positive feelings of satisfaction or negative feelings of dissatisfaction. Although achievement was mentioned most frequently as a source of satisfaction, the competence and friendliness of supervision along with pay offer the most intense feelings of satisfaction. By the same token, lack of recognition by supervision and lack of security were the chief causes of dissatisfaction. Increased responsibility and advancement were not motivators (for women production line workers) but instead recognition and understanding by the immediate supervisor motivate the female assembler.

### Conclusion

If a manager is to understand the reactions of subordinates to their job, he must understand what they want from their work. An understanding of the satisfactions they seek, and how they seek them, will help the manager in making countless day-to-day decisions covering the whole range of personnel administration--selection, compensation, discipline, motivation, and all the rest. This understanding is one of the keys to effective supervision.

A function of needs as well as job satisfaction is morale. Morale has been described as "the extent to which an individual's needs are satisfied and the extent to which the individual perceives that satisfaction as stemming from his total job situation."<sup>1</sup> This definition is of value since it stresses the importance of needs satisfaction and applies to individuals as well as those who are members of a group. It also refers to the total work situation rather than the job itself.

In designing motivational systems--the environment in which work is performed--a balance must be maintained between goals and needs of the organization and the goals, needs, and capabilities of its members.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert M. Guion, "Industrial Morale," Personnel Psychology, Vol. XI, Spring 1958, p. 62.